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VIEWS IN INDIA,

CHIEFLY AMONG THE

HIMALAYA MOUNTAINS.

BY

LIEUT. GEORGE FRANCIS WHITE,

OF THE 31st REGT.

&c. &c.

EDITED BY

EMMA ROBERTS.

> "I HAVE BEHELD NEARLY ALL THE CELEBRATED SCENERY OF EUROPE, WHICH POETS AND PAINTERS HAVE IMMORTALIZED, AND OF WHICH ALL THE TOURISTS IN THE WORLD ARE ENAMOURED; BUT I HAVE SEEN IT SURPASSED IN THESE UNFREQUENTED AND ALMOST UNKNOWN REGIONS."
>
> CAPT. SKINNER'S JOURNAL OF A TOUR IN THE HIMALAYA MOUNTAINS.

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PREFACE.

In offering the following series of Views to the public, it would be superfluous to descant upon the extraordinary degree of interest which they possess, illustrating, as they do, a portion of our Indian territories hitherto little known, and comprising the most splendid Mountain Scenery which can be found throughout the world. The Publishers have spared neither pains nor cost in the Engravings, which have been got up at a vast expense (£2,400), from Drawings executed on the spot by an enterprising and accomplished traveller. The difficulties and dangers attendant upon a journey through the Himalaya, to the sources of the Ganges and Jumna, will be gathered from the ensuing pages; and the Views, taken by Lieut. White, in addition to their spirit and fidelity, must be highly valued by all who can appreciate the ardour and energy which could alone have produced them, amid the toils, fatigues, and even perils of his Mountain Tour. The descriptive portion must speak for itself; its accuracy may be relied upon, and it will be found to contain much new and interesting information concerning the alpine regions of the East.

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PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

ON

THE HIMALAYA MOUNTAINS.

The Himalaya mountains, signifying the abode of snow, form that tremendous barrier, which, stretching from the Indus on the north-west to the Bramaputra on the south-east, divides the plains of Hindostan from the wilds of Thibet and Tartary. This chain of mountains comprises numerous ranges, extending in different directions west of the Indus; one of its ramifications, running in a still more westerly direction, is known to the Afghans by the name of the Hindoo Kosh, the whole stupendous range being merely broken by the Indus. From the north-east point of Cashmere, it takes a south-eastern course, stretching along the sources of all the Punjab rivers, except the Sutlej, where it separates the hilly portion of the Lahore province from those tracts which have been designated in modern geography, Little Thibet. Still pursuing the same direction, it crosses the heads of the Ganges and Jumna, and compels their currents towards a southward channel. Farther east, the chain is supposed to be less continuous, it being the generally received opinion that it is penetrated by the Gunduck, the Arun, the Cosi, and the Teesta. Beyond the limits of Bootan, the course of the chain, extending into an unexplored country, can be traced no longer; but the supposition is in favour of its running to the Chinese sea, skirting the northern frontier of the provinces of Quangsi and Quantong, and lessening in height as it advances to the east. The portion of this extensive chain which borders Hindostan, rises to an elevation far exceeding that of any other mountains in the world, in some places forming an impassable barrier to the countries beyond, and rendering their extent a matter for conjecture only. The breadth of the snowy chain varies in different parts between the Sutlej and the Ganges; it has been estimated at about eighty miles from the plains of Hindostan to those of Thibet. The heights of this splendid barrier are unassailable by man, but in some places the beds of rivers which intersect it afford access to its wild fastnesses; and as a few penetrate the mighty mass, there is a possibility that the unceasing efforts of scientific persons may force a passage through the rocks and snows of these desert wastes. The ranges of hills extending in a southerly direction from the Himalaya, are divided into numerous principalities, to the eastward of the Sutlej—Sirmoor, Gurwall, Kumaon, Nepaul; and many others are to be found, several of which were unknown to the European inhabitants of India, previous to the Ghoorka wars of 1815, an event which has led to our present acquaintance with this highly interesting country.

There is very little level ground to be found throughout the whole of these districts, which consist entirely of a succession of exceedingly high ridges, crossing each other continually, and presenting a confusion almost wholly indescribable as they branch out from the great elevations beyond. Towards the source, if it may be so called, of the great chain, these mountainous ranges increase in height, the lowest arising abruptly from a long and gentle slope stretching to the plains. These hills are exceedingly steep and narrow at the summit, and they approach each other so closely, that excepting in Nepaul there are very few valleys, the channels that divide them being nothing more than ravines.

We are at present unacquainted with any mountains that exceed the height of the Himalaya; the Andes, long supposed to be the most gigantic in the world, being overtopped by no fewer than twenty of the peaks of these snow-crowned monarchs. Considerable as the estimate taken has been, there is great probability that if the policy of the Ghoorka government would admit of a nearer approach, we should find the heights of some of these peaks to exceed the present computation. The Dhawalagira, or the White Mountain, is supposed to be one of the loftiest; it is situated, according to the common belief, near the source of the Gunduck, and the measurement taken by scientific men employed in the survey, give it a height of 27,000 feet above the level of the sea. Many travellers well qualified to afford a very accurate guess upon the subject, are of opinion that there are peaks in the most northern portion of the Himalaya, which greatly exceed the general calculation. The following table, therefore, the result of a very careful and scientific survey, by Captains Hodson, Webb, and Herbert, may be received with confidence as affording an under, rather than an over estimate of the relative heights of these enormous peaks :--

	FEET.
Dhawalagiri, or the White Mountains; above the level of the sea . .	27,000
Nunda Debee, one of the Juwahir cluster of peaks, and No. 14, A, 2, of Hodson and Herbert's survey	25,741
Setghur, properly Swetaghur, or the White Tower north of Nepaul .	25,261
A mountain, supposed to be Dhaibau, above Catmandoo 20,140 feet; above the sea	24,768
A mountain, not named, observed from Catmandoo, in the direction of Caila-Bhairava, 20,000 feet above the valley of Nepaul, and above the level of the sea	24,625
Another near to it, 18,662 feet above the Nepaul valley; above the level of the sea	23,261
A third in the vicinity, 18,451 ditto; . . . . ditto . .	23,052
Two peaks, named St. George and St. Patrick, situated at the head of the Bhagiruttee, or true Ganges; calculated in Hodson and Herbert's survey—the first at	22,654
——— the last at	22,798
The two peaks of the Roodroo Himala, north-east of the Ganges, 23,390, and	22,906

	FEET.
Peaks of the Jumnootree, or Bunderpooch Mountains, (giving rise to the Jumna, the Tonse, and the Berai Gunga,) varying in elevation from 20,122, to	21,155
Also upwards of fifty inferior peaks, lying between lon. 78° and 80° East, varying from 18 to	20,000

In clear weather, the most lofty of these mountains in the direction of Catmandoo in Nepaul, may be seen from Patna, at the distance of 160 geographical miles; while in some places, Purneah and Rejmhal, for instance, they are visible at a still more extraordinary distance, 232 English miles; a circumstance which, according to the calculation of Mr. Colebrooke, establishes their height to be at least 28,000 feet, since nothing less would render them barely discernible at that distance in the mean state of the atmosphere; although under circumstances of extraordinary refraction, a lower altitude would produce the same effect.

In consequence of their vast extent and the various difficulties, partly arising from the nature of the country, and partly from the unwillingness to admit strangers within their territories, manifested by the Ghoorka and Chinese governments, a very considerable portion of the Himalaya remains unexplored: our acquaintance, however, with this interesting country is improving every day. In addition to the numerous scientific travellers anxious to add to the stock of information already gathered by the indefatigable researches of Messrs. Colebrooke, Fraser, Webb, Raper, Hodson, Herbert, the Gerards, and Royle, hosts of idlers from the plains are continually ranging through the most accessible places, or extending their wanderings to others less known. The journals, notes, diaries, private letters, and conversation of these gentlemen, have contributed many very interesting particulars relative to the scenery, geology, &c.; and in the course of a few years we may hope, through these sources, to acquire a very correct idea of the whole of this splendid region.

We have at present an extremely limited acquaintance with the passes which intersect the snowy mountains, and conduct the traveller from one to the other: those that are known, always lead over the lowest parts of the range, at an elevation varying from 15 to 16,000 feet; between steep ascents, several thousand feet higher. The European traveller is best acquainted with the Shatool or Rol passes, near the course of the Sutlej, and the Gonass, and Bruang passes, the last named near the Paber. The former are very difficult, many travellers intending to cross, having been prevented by the bitterness of the cold, and the numerous obstacles opposing themselves to farther progress. The Shattool pass is nearly equal in height to the summit of Mont Blanc, being about 15,400 feet above the level of the sea. It is flanked by an inaccessible peak two thousand feet higher; and though the entrance to the pass is by a very gradual ascent, it becomes exceedingly abrupt and difficult of access when approaching its greatest altitude. In descending, the natives wrap a blanket tightly round them, and slide down in a sitting posture thirty or forty feet at a time; and some English gentlemen, improving on this

kindness, and it was then delicately hinted, that, in order to stimulate her friend to the enterprise, it would be advisable to present him with the kohi noor, a gem which he was very anxious to possess. The queen, who was no bad diplomatist, declared herself quite certain that the moment her husband found himself at liberty, he would be but too happy to gratify the wishes of the invaluable friend who had started up in his distress, but that at present the diamond was in pawn at Candahar, for two lacs of rupees. Runjeet Singh believed as much of the representation as he pleased; but having shewn his desire to obtain the diamond, it was necessary to prevent it from being despatched to a place of security; and, therefore, entirely losing sight of the chivalric character which he had lately assumed, he threw the confidential servants of the unfortunate princesses into close confinement, and surrounded their abode with sentinels, who had strict orders to search every person who should attempt to pass. This measure not having the desired effect, he determined to resort to one still more disgraceful, and deprived the ladies and their household of all supplies, either of food or water, for two days. These heroic women still holding out, the Seik was ashamed of continuing a system likely to end in the death of the parties who had claimed his hospitality, and was fain to be content with a promise of the jewel, to be redeemed when the imprisoned monarch should be put in possession of Rotas. Runjeet Singh now set seriously to work, and having entered into an alliance with the ruler of Affghanistan, they agreed to send a large force into Cashmere, which had rebelled, to subdue the country, and to obtain the person of Shah Sujah.

The expedition was successful, but it cost Runjeet rather dearly, many Seiks perishing in the snow; and his ally, Futty Khan, deriving the greater share of the benefit. This chieftain installed his brother in the government of the valley, and the Seiks were for the present obliged to remain content with the custody of the royal captive, who was conveyed to his family at Lahore. The success of the expedition furnished a fair pretext for the renewal of the inhospitable demand for the great diamond; and the king vainly endeavoured to evade the sacrifice, by professing his willingness to fulfil the promise given by his wife, when the restoration of the territory should enable him to redeem the precious kohi noor now in pledge for two lacs. Runjeet Singh was not so easily cajoled; he therefore proceeded to extremities, imprisoned his unhappy guests, threatened them with perpetual incarceration, and kept them without food for several days. Perceiving resistance to be useless, Shah Sujah at last came to terms, stipulating for a sum of money and a month's time, to recover the diamond, and pay off the loan upon it; but this attempt to gain something in exchange was not successful. Runjeet Singh, too wary to be outwitted, and well knowing how easily he could repossess himself of money advanced to a prisoner, produced the two lacs without hesitation, and a day was appointed for the surrender of the coveted jewel.

Shah Sujah, the representative of a race of kings, sat in dignified silence opposite to the mean-spirited oppressor, whose family, raised to power by a freak of fortune, could only trace their descent from thieves. It is said, that for a whole hour the exiled monarch gazed impressively upon the robber chief without speaking, and that Runjeet Singh, whom this mute eloquence failed to move, desired somebody acquainted with the Persian language to remind his majesty of the purpose for which they had met. The shah, without opening his lips, "spoke with his eyes" to an attendant, who, retiring, returned with a small parcel, which he placed between the great men. The envelopes were speedily removed, and the jewellers, who were stationed behind, recognising the diamond, assured their master, that it was the veritable *kohi noor*.

Nothing now remained but the repossession of the two lacs; which was speedily accomplished. Runjeet despatched a picked body of his satellites to the residence of his unfortunate guests, with orders to bring away, without any reservation, the money and jewels belonging to the party. These commands were literally obeyed; not only every ornament being taken, but rich dresses also, together with the swords, shields, and matchlocks, which were mounted in gold or silver. The maha-rajah appropriated every thing which he thought worthy of retention to his own use, sending back those articles which he considered to be of little or no value, observing to his courtiers, that it was useless to get a bad name for such rubbish. Nothing more being procurable, and some feeling of policy or remorse preventing him from taking the lives of those whom he had so shamefully pillaged, Runjeet Singh allowed the females to escape to Loodianah, where they were some time afterwards rejoined by their husbands, on whom the British government settled 50,000 rupees, (five thousand pounds a year,) which they continue to enjoy. The Mogul and Affghan horse-dealers, who frequent the fair at Hurdwar, (if their reports may be relied upon,) would give us reason to believe that the situation of the ex-king of Cabool excites great interest and compassion, and that the tributaries of Runjeet Singh would be delighted, were the British to restore Shah Sujah to the throne. These men seem to be much puzzled to guess the reason that the English do not invade the maha-rajah's territories; they abhor the Seiks, because they are gradually seizing the Affghan dependencies, and they fancy that the Lahore chieftain pays six cowries in the rupee to the Company, for permission to hold the countries he has conquered, and to receive their revenues, our non-interference system being otherwise unaccountable.

Runjeet Singh, though owing the greater portion of his acquisitions to craft of the lowest kind, and of the most unjustifiable nature, is possessed of talents of no common order, which, if properly cultivated, would have secured for him an ascendancy based upon a more honourable foundation; but with too many of the vices of the Asiatic character, he has also a very large proportion of those ridiculous notions which are obsolete in countries illuminated by the light of science. The Seik ruler is a great believer in omens, and not only consults the stars, but also the chirpings of birds, previous to any measure of importance. He has lately suffered from ill health, but the remedies prescribed by European physicians have been neglected, for the advice of soothsayers. These personages took upon themselves to discover the cause of the malady of the sovereign, which some old beggar-woman had naturally enough attributed to the oppression of his people. Upon consulting the stars, they found Saturn in the ascendant, a planet which, according to general belief, always exerts a baleful influence. There was no difficulty now in tracing the liver complaint and dysentery of the lion of the Punjab, to its true source: but what was to be done in such an emergence? the dislodgment of a planet from the sky being beyond the power of the maha-rajah, great as he undoubtedly is. Nevertheless, it was necessary to hit upon some method to get rid of the malignant influence, and it was determined to transport the planet in

who is [illegible] which hold the supreme power, [illegible] commanding the [illegible] by the sword.

[illegible] by the [illegible] belong to the kings of the [illegible] Kootub Shahee dynasty, and their relatives and personal dependents. The most ancient [illegible] of the tombs [illegible] nearly three hundred years ago; the remainder, at successive [illegible] a hundred and fifty years, the date of the latest erection. [illegible] very splendid specimens of the [illegible] over the civilised world, and [illegible]. The body of the building [illegible] by a dome, [illegible] figures of [illegible] and surrounded by [illegible] of the chief mausoleum [illegible] with a minaret at each angle. [illegible] larger tombs. About [illegible] supporting a balustrade, and [illegible]. From the centre of [illegible] forms the principal [illegible] being [illegible] resembling that of a [illegible] with the [illegible] part cut off. The [illegible] are [illegible] of grey [illegible] wrought; the upper portion coated with [illegible] in the porcelain tiles so much in use throughout many of the buildings [illegible] of the tombs [illegible] a kind of [illegible] colours [illegible]. Extracts from the Koran [illegible] in white letters upon a [illegible] ground, all in good preservation, and producing a fine effect.

[illegible] but is [illegible] by a gallery [illegible] the whole quadrangle. According to the usual custom in such buildings, there is a Mosque attached to each, and formerly the whole was surrounded by pleasure-grounds, well planted with trees and flowers, and watered by fountains. These have disappeared, together with the carpets that covered the floors, and the rich draperies thrown over the sarcophagi which [illegible] the places tenanted by the bodies of the dead. The large tomb to the left of the engraving is raised to the memory of a female sovereign, Hyat Begum: the monarch her father, having no son, bequeathed the kingdom to the husband of his daughter, who [illegible] in a manner befitting her high rank and her splendid dowry.

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